The Stamps of Canada, Chapter VI

Based on a Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added

Chapter VI.—The First "Cents" Issue

Left to right, Scott 14-17

Left to right, Scott 18-20

While the somewhat cumbrous English currency of pounds, shillings and pence has presented little or no difficulty in those parts of the Empire where it has always been on the same basis as in the Mother country, the fact that in Canada it had two valuations—"currency" and "sterling"—made it an inevitable conclusion that a change would have to be made sooner or later. The close proximity of Canada to the United States gave it a very practical illustration of the advantages of a decimal system of money; the American currency of dollars and cents was legalised in the Province of Canada in 1853; and it is, therefore, small matter for wonder that ultimately a decimal system of currency similar to that in vogue in the United States was adopted. This change took place in 1859 and the Postmaster-General's Report for that year alluded to the necessary changes in the postage stamps as follows:

The Law of last Session directing the conversion of all postage rates into decimals, and the collection of postage in the new decimal currency, was put in operation on the 1st July. Decimal stamps of the value of 1 cent, 5 cents, and 10 cents for ordinary correspondence, and of 12-1/2 cents for Canadian, and of 17 cents for British Packet Postage Rates were obtained in readiness for the commencement of the Decimal Postage Law in July, 1859, and have from that date been issued in lieu of the stamps previously in use.

The Law referred to on the above mentioned Report was assented to on May 4th, 1859, and as some of the provisions are of philatelic interest we reproduce them as follows:—

1.—There shall be payable on all Newspapers sent by Post in Canada, except "Exchange Papers" addressed to Editors and Publishers of Newspapers, such rate of Postage, not exceeding one cent on each such Newspaper, as the Governor in Council shall from time to time direct by regulation and such rate shall be payable on all such Newspapers, posted on or after the first day of July next.

2.—So much of any Act as provides that Newspapers posted within this Province shall pass free of postage, in cases other than those in which they will be free under this Act is hereby repealed.

3.—In order to adapt the operations of the Post Office to the Decimal Currency, the internal letter postage rate shall be changed from three pence to its equivalent of five cents, per half ounce—the charge for advertising a dead letter from three farthings to two cents—the charge for returning a dead letter to the writer, from one penny to three cents; and in all cases where a one halfpenny or penny rate of Postage is chargeable, these rates shall be changed to one cent and two cents respectively.

4.—To promote simplicity and economy in the business of the Post Office, all letters posted in Canada for any place within the Province, and not prepaid, shall be charged seven instead of five cents per half ounce on delivery; and on letters posted for the British Mails, for the other British North American Provinces, or for the United States, when not prepaid, there shall be charged such addition to the ordinary rate, not in any case exceeding a double rate, as the Post Master General may agree upon with the Post Office Authorities of those Countries, for the purpose of enforcing prepayment.

Canada 1859 1¢ rose (Sc. 14) tied by numeral "13" four-ring cancel on folded top part of August 9, 1862 edition of The Globe.

Canada 1859 1¢ rose (Sc. 14) horizontal pair tied by "Montreal L.C., JU 9 1860" c.d.s. on blue cover to Richmond, Canada, with matching "Registered" straightline and manuscript "14" due rating. The 2¢ registry fee was paid by stamps, but the domestic letter double rate postage was not. There was a 2¢ penalty for each unpaid rate. The charge here is 5¢ per 1/2 ounce times two, plus a 4¢ penalty for a total of 14¢ to be paid by the receiver.

5.—The Post Master General may establish a Parcel Post and parcels other than letters and not containing letters, may be sent by such Parcel Post, and when so sent shall be liable to such charges for

conveyance and to such regulations as the Governor in Council shall from time to time see fit to make.

It will be noted that the above Act, aside from showing the rates in the new currency as compared with the old, provides for a greater limitation of the privilege of free transmission of newspapers, and provides for the establishment of a Parcel Post.

No further reference seems to have been made to the parcel post until the Postmaster-General's Report for June 30th, 1864, where it is stated:—

By means of the Parcel Post a parcel may be sent within the Province to or from any place, however remote from the ordinary lines of traffic conveyance, on prepayment of a postage rate of 25 cents per lb., provided that the weight or size of the parcel does not exceed the carrying capacity of an ordinary mail bag; and provided that the contents of the parcel are not of a character to injure the rest of the mail.

Later the parcel post system was extended so that it embraced the sister Provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, the rate remaining at 25c per lb. Apparently the weight and size of a parcel acceptable by the postal authorities still remained delightfully vague and indefinite and was simply limited by "the carrying capacity of an ordinary mail bag."

As we have seen from the Postmaster-General's Report for 1859 the first "cents" stamps were placed in use on July 1st of that year. The series comprised the values 1c, 5c, 10c, 12-1/2c and 17c these corresponding to the 1/2d, 3d, 6d, 7-1/2d and 10d denominations previously in use. The designs of the new stamps were adapted from those of the corresponding values of the old issue as a comparison of the two series will amply demonstrate.

The 1c differs from the 1/2d only in the words denoting the value below the portrait. The 5c differs from the 3d not only as regards the new inscription of value but has small ornaments on the oval band dividing CANADA POSTAGE from FIVE CENTS. In the corners the numerals "5," replacing "3," are placed in an oblique position on a ground of crossed lines.

Two 1859 printed promissory notes from Peterboro to Cobourg, the first bearing the perforated 3d red pence issue (Sc. 12) tied by a numeral "30" four-ring cancel on cover prepaying the old 3d letter rate, with June 28 Peterboro c.d.s., only a few days before the currency change [July 1]; the second bearing a 5¢ vermilion (Sc. 15) tied by "30" with July 8 c.d.s. prepaying the new 5¢ domestic letter rate mailed only a few days after the currency change.

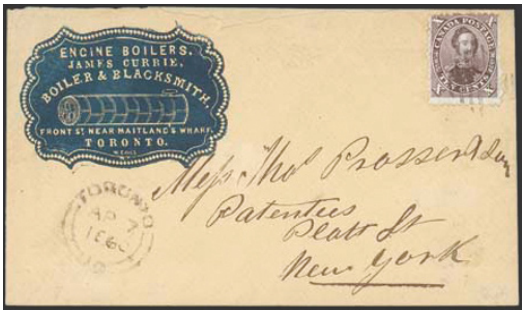
The Stamps of Canada, Ch. VI, Part 2

Based on a Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added

Chapter VI.—The First "Cents" Issue, Cont.

The 10¢ differs from the 6d in having the corner numerals (represented by the Roman "X") placed obliquely on a cross hatched ground instead of upright on a ground of foliate ornamentation, while TEN CENTS replaces SIX PENCE under the portrait.

Above, Canada 1859 10¢ deep red purple (Sc. 17e) tied by ring cancels on a blue folded cover to London, Upper Canada, with "Montreal L.C., NO 29 1859" origin c.d.s. and matching "More To Pay" and "Unpaid 7" straightline handstamps; right, 10¢ red lilac, Sc. 17.



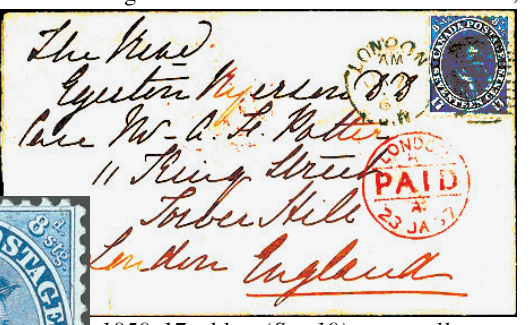
1859 10¢ red lilac (Sc. 17), tied by Toronto square grid on advertising cover to New York, Apr 7, 1860 blue cameo-style illustrated corner card for a boilermaker/blacksmith.

The 12-1/2¢ differs from the 7-1/2d only as regards the corners where "12-1/2¢" replaces the former values of "6d. stg" and "7-1/2d cy".

Left, 1859, 12-1/2¢ yellow green Specimen plate proof on India paper (Unitrade 18Pi); right, 12-1/2¢ blue green (Sc. 18a) tied by concentric rings cancels on 1867 cover to St. John's, Newfoundland, "Quebec L.C., SP 23 '67" origin c.d.s.

On the new 17¢ the words of value required so much more room than the TEN PENCE on the old denomination that the emblems between the upper and lower inscriptions on the oval were retired in favor of small elliptical ornaments. The upper corners were unaltered but in the lower ones "10cy" was removed and "17" substituted.

It is obvious that the original dies were made use of in each case, the central portions being retained and new orders engraved.

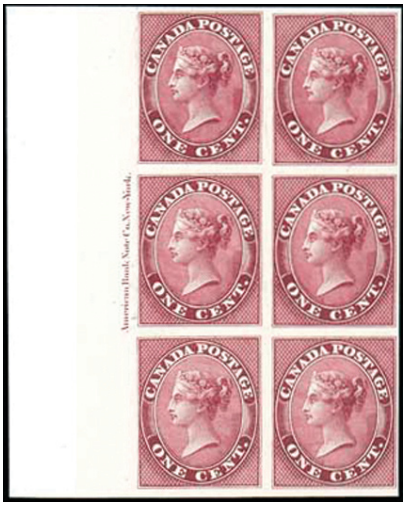


1859 17¢ blue (Sc. 19) on small cover to England tied by "London C.W. 1867" [Canada West] grid duplex, also with red London [England] "Paid". An example of the single 17¢ rate per Royal Mail Steamer (Cunard Line).

Sc. 19

The stamps were manufactured by the American Bank Note Company, of New York, which firm had succeeded to the business established by Messrs. Rawdon, Wright, Hatch and Edson. The new firm name came into effect on May 1st, 1858.

The stamps were printed in sheets of 100 by the line-engraved process the manufacturers' imprint, "American Bank Note Co., New York" appearing twice in each margin in very small letters. For some reason or other no imprint was applied to the plate for the 17¢ value.



1859 1¢ deep rose trial color plate proof on India (Sc. 14P) left margin block of six with "American Bank Note Co., New-York." imprint.

In the Law relating to the adoption of decimal currency, reproduced in a previous installment, we read in section 3 that "in all cases where a one-half penny or penny rate of Postage is chargeable, these rates shall be changed to one cent and two cents respectively." Yet, though a 1¢ stamp was included in the series in 1859 no 2¢ made its appearance until 1864.

This new value was issued on August 1st, 1864, according to the Postmaster-General's Report for that year while the Report for the following year states that "A provision has been made for the transmission and delivery of Canadian periodicals, addressed to the United Kingdom, at the reduced rate of two cents each" and it is probably due to the increased demand for the 2¢ denomination under this new rate that the stamp made its appearance.

The Stamps of Canada, Ch. VI, Part 3

Based on a Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added

Chapter VI.—The First "Cents" Issue, Cont.

The design for the 2¢ denomination was evidently copied from the 1¢ though the addition of numerals in each of the lower corners gives it a strikingly different appearance from that of the lower value.

Curiously enough the 2¢ was printed in almost the same color as the 1¢ and in commenting on this fact the *Stamp Collectors' Magazine* for October 1st, 1864, stated:—

We are surprised that a different hue was not chosen for the 2 cents, and should imagine its great similarity to the 1 cent, should the latter not be withdrawn from circulation, would tend to create confusion.

Canada, 1864, Queen Victoria, 2¢ rose (Sc. 20, top), with slightly overlapping 1¢ rose (Sc. 14), each canceled by concentric-rings on cover to Toronto, Ont., with matching "Fingal C.W., JU 1 1868" c.d.s. (lower left)

This new denomination was printed in sheets of 100 like the others of the series, and had eight imprints in the margins.

A close study of these stamps should reveal many points of interest. For many years a double transfer of the 5¢, of a similar character to that found on its predecessor the 3d has been known. This is recorded in Scott's catalogue as a "double transfer" while Gibbons notes it as a variety "with extra line in outer oval at left".

5¢ vermilion, major re-entry (15 var.), position 28 showing doubling of nearly the whole design, especially dramatic on the left side.

This variety, which is simply the most prominent of many double transfers found in connection with this 5¢ stamp, shows the outer line of the oval at left distinctly doubled, and the frame lines above are also double. Other varieties which, though not so prominent, are of equal philatelic importance are found. We have seen the following and have no doubt many others exist:—

1. There are distinct traces of doubling in the letters ADA and POST of CANADA POSTAGE, in the numerals in the upper angles, and of the lines of the oval band.

2. There is a faint doubling of the outer frame lines at the top right hand corner.

3. There is a similar doubling of the outer frame lines affecting the lower right hand corner.

4. The lines of the oval band are faintly doubled at the lower left.

5. The letters POST of POSTAGE, the "5" above, and the lines of oval and frame all show distinct signs of double transferring.

6. This double transfer affects the lines, numeral, and letters NADA of CANADA at the upper left corner and while not so distinct as No. 5 is nevertheless a true plate variety.

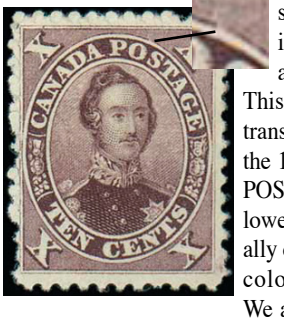
We have found no traces of double transfers in the other denominations except a slight one on the 12-1/2¢. This shows a slight doubling of the frame lines in the top left corner, as well as traces of colored lines in the adjacent "12-1/2c". It is quite probable that any collector having sufficient material would find "doubles" in all of these values.

In laying down the impressions on the plate or plates for the 5¢ value a guide dot was applied to the transfer roll. This occupied such a position that as each succeeding impression was applied to the plate it fell so that the guide dot would fall about the centre of the C of CENTS. Consequently, the vast majority of these stamps show a conspicuous dot of color in the position indicated. The stamps without the colored dot are, usually, those from the extreme left vertical row of the sheet.

Left, 5¢ brown red proof on India on card, with dot in C; right, Sc. 15 variety with no dot

On this same value—the 5¢—we have seen specimens with colored dots outside and slightly to the left of the lower left corner. These are possibly plate dots marked to indicate where each row should commence. Varieties with broken frame lines are not uncommon and these may be due in part to defective transfers and in part to wear. Extreme wear is also shown, in some instances, by the numerals appearing on an almost plain ground. Whether guide dots were used for the other denominations or not we cannot say. At any rate if they were used they were applied in such a position as to be completely hidden by some part or other of the designs.

A small peculiarity in the 10¢ is worth noting. On the majority of specimens there is a slight defect or break in the outer line of the oval band above and to the right of the O of POSTAGE. This is probably due to a minute defect on the transfer-roll impression. Many specimens of the 12-1/2¢ value show the tongue of the E of POSTAGE the same length as the upper and lower arms though the end is generally covered with a colored smudge. We are at a loss to account for the cause of this variety but that it is a "constant" one we have satisfied ourselves by the examination of a number of identical specimens. The 17¢ also exhibits a small peculiarity of engraving. A colored line projects upwards into the uncolored oval band above the space between OS of POSTAGE. This was evidently caused by an accidental touch of the engraver's tool on the die for it is quite distinct on every specimen we have examined.



(For our Online edition readers, you will get a better look at these varieties with your pdf magnifier tool.

The Stamps of Canada, Ch. VI, Part 4

Based on a Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added

Chapter VI.—The First "Cents" Issue, Cont.

The paper upon which the stamps of this series were printed does not provide so much variation as that of the earlier emissions. Mr. D. A. King in his article in the Monthly Journal says:

The papers upon which these stamps are printed may be divided into five classes:

I.—Ordinary, coarse, white wove paper.

II.—Similar paper, of a yellowish tint, and slightly ribbed.

III.—A hard greyish paper, very slightly ribbed.

IV.—White wove paper, very slightly ribbed.

V.—A white paper, very hard and closely ribbed.

Canada 1859 10¢ deep red purple, Sc. 17e, on thick paper.

Canada 1859 12-1/2¢ yellow green on thick paper (Sc. 18 var.)

In addition we are told that all the above varieties come in at least two thicknesses. Scott's catalogue is content with a classification of "wove" paper with a sub-variety of "ribbed" for the 1¢ and 5¢ denominations. Mr. Howes extends the "ribbed" variety to all values but, as we have pointed out in earlier chapters, it is extremely unlikely that any such variety as a real ribbed paper was used, the ribbed lines being simply due to some idiosyncrasy of manufacture. To again quote Mr. King:

The best way to distinguish this paper from the others that have the appearance of ribbing, is to hold the stamp before a strong light, when the ribbing will appear like fine horizontal laid lines on the 5¢, and vertical laid lines in the other values. Looking through the paper is the only sure test, as many of the stamps on the other papers have the appearance of being ribbed. To differentiate between stamps on ribbed paper and those having the "appearance" of being ribbed is surely getting very close to the ridiculous.

Left, 10¢ black brown, Sc. 16; right, 10¢ red lilac, Sc. 17 (See our front cover for color images)

With the exception of the 10¢ the stamps of this issue provide but little variation in shade but the 10¢ more than makes up for this lack in the others for it exists in almost every conceivable tint from bright red-lilac through shades of violet and brown to a brown so intense as to be catalogued as a distinct variety described as "black-brown".

All the stamps of this series were normally perforated 12 by single line machines. All values are known entirely imperforate and it would seem that these, or most of them, are perfectly legitimate errors. The *Philatelic Record* for October, 1882, says:—"We have seen a used imperforate copy of the 5 cents, 1859, which is beyond challenge".

Mr. King states:—"The imperforate varieties are all legitimate, and undoubtedly genuine, having been seen in pairs, or in single copies with margins beyond cavil".

Left, Canada Sc. 14a, 1859 1¢ rose imperforate pair; only 100 stamps issued imperforate

Below, Canada Sc. 20b, 1864 2¢ rose imperf pair

Mr. Charles L. Pack writing in the *London Philatelist* regarding these varieties says:—

I have the 1¢ and 5¢ imperforates postmarked in 1860 and 1861 at Toronto and Prescott, Canada West. I also believe that these varieties were on sale at Kingston, Canada West, at about that time. I have also the 2¢ and 10¢ in undoubtedly early used condition.

Bi-sected varieties of the 5¢ and 10¢ of this issue are known though, as Mr. Howes states of these varieties, they "were never authorised and seldom used".

1859 Prince Albert 10¢ deep red purple diagonal bisect, Sc. 17d, lower right diagonal half tied across half by concentric rings cancel on buff cover to Hatley with matching "Lennoxville C.E., NO 29 1860" c.d.s., manuscript "Paid" and "Paid" handstamp over which bisect was applied, also with "Brompton C.E., NO 28 1860" origin c.d.s. on reverse. One of only eight recorded 10¢ bisect covers.

The *Philatelic Record* for October, 1888, mentions a part of a cover with a 10¢ and half of a 5¢ side by side which were evidently used in prepayment of the 12-1/2¢ rate, while Mr. Howes records the existence of a pair of the 5¢ used with a half stamp of the same denomination to make up the 12-1/2¢ packet rate. The same writer records a diagonal half of the 10¢ used as a 5¢ stamp from Bowmanville, Upper Canada, on February 15th, 1860. Whether these "splits" were the work of private parties or were made by postal officials to fill a temporary shortage of certain values will probably never be known.

Reference List.

1859-64. Engraved and Printed by the American Bank Note Co., New York, on white wove paper. Perforated 12.

Sc. 14, 1859 1¢ rose.

Sc. 15, 1859 5¢ vermilion.

Sc. 16, 1859 10¢ black brown

Sc. 17, 1859 10¢ red lilac

Sc. 18, 1859 12-1/2¢ yellow green

Sc. 19, 1859 17¢ blue

Sc. 20, 1859 1864 2¢ rose